



CITY OF CONCORD

General Services Department

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Solid Waste Contract in Concord Presents Possibility for New Disposal Site and Automated Trash Collection

CONCORD, NH — The City of Concord is preparing to enter into a new solid waste contract as its existing 10-year contract with Casella Waste Management is set to expire on June 30, 2024.

The City's current contract is unmatched to any other solid waste contract in the region, possibly even in the country, as Concord has been privileged with a decade of comparatively low rates and no tonnage fee for recycling, an unprecedented benefit. Industry trends since the last contract was established reflect increased costs, decreased landfill capacity, recycling market changes, and a transition to automated collection.

The global commodity market for recycling has shifted in recent years with concerns around contamination and quality of materials. Since China's National Sword policy, processing recyclables is more complex and expensive.

The City has anticipated increased costs for this new contract and has been estimating expenses in the solid waste pro forma for the past few years. Based on the market average right now, adjustments anticipated include recycling rates to change presently from \$0/ton to approximately \$100/ton. In addition, disposal costs are expected to increase from about \$70/ton to about \$100/ton, and collection rates will also be higher due to fuel and labor cost increases.

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Instead of extending the current contract, the City elected to enter into a competitive RFP (request for proposal) process that separated disposal and collection services into two different RFPs to attract more vendors and provide more available options to the City.

Based on the submittals received, City staff has conditionally awarded Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Services to Casella Waste Management for disposal of its solid waste at the Wheelabrator Concord Company (WIN Waste Innovations) facility located in Concord. This is currently a conditional proposal that would need to be approved by City Council.

Casella Waste Management was determined to be the lowest cost collections provider for the City. In addition, they were the only vendor to submit a complete proposal for all requested services: curbside collection of solid waste and recycling, containerized (dumpster) collection of multi-family, municipal, and school solid waste and recycling; recyclable processing; transportation; Downtown Solid Waste District containerized collection and disposal of solid waste and recycling; spring and fall bagged leaf collection; Christmas tree collection; and transfer station operation and management (conditional on the award of all other contract elements).

WIN Waste Innovations was determined to be the lowest cost disposal provider for the City. In addition, WIN Waste Innovations is a local waste-to-energy facility that converts waste material into renewable energy to sustainably power neighboring communities. The benefit is that the City would manage disposal locally, but also the State of New Hampshire prefers waste-to-energy facilities over landfills because they can recover energy, reduce trash volume, and reduce greenhouse gases produced from landfill decomposition. Concord's solid waste is currently transported to the landfill in Bethlehem, New Hampshire.

The RFPs the City put out to bid were for 5-year terms, but different contract terms were presented during the negotiation process that could include 7 or 10-year terms, depending on variable factors that include if and when the City would switch from manual to automated trash collection.

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Automated trash collection involves a trash hauler operating a mechanical arm on the side of a collection truck to lift and empty toter carts. Automated collection requires the use of standardized toter carts to be able to collect materials at the curb. This collection method is becoming the standard service provided by trash haulers. Other municipalities in NH have already transitioned to automated collection, including Manchester, Nashua, Rochester, Londonderry, Bow, and Laconia.

Currently, the City of Concord utilizes manual collection, in which trash workers physically grab materials at the curb and place them into the truck. Manual trash collection is being phased out of the industry and will no longer be a service that will be provided by vendors in the future.

“Manual collection is not a service that will be available in future markets,” stated General Services Director Chip Chesley. “We believe that this is the last contract the city will have that includes manual curbside collection.”

Switching to automated trash collection seems to be inevitable, it’s just a matter of when and how it will be implemented. Casella provided the City of Concord with several proposal options to transition to automated collection:

- An immediate transition on July 1, 2024, as an alternate with a five-year term, or
- A sudden transition on July 1, 2029 at the end of a five-year manual collection term, or
- An orderly transition by July 1, 2027 after a two-year pilot that starts by July 1, 2025 as proposed by Casella’s seven-year term, or
- An orderly transition by July 1, 2028, after a two-year pilot that starts by July 1, 2026 as proposed by Casella’s ten-year term.

There are a lot of things to consider with automated collection: management of toter carts, compliance with the City’s Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program, navigating equipment through narrow streets and dense neighborhoods, and residential concerns regarding the weight/size of toters in relation to storage and transporting to the curb.

Given these proposed timelines, the General Services Department recommends the last proposed option from Casella. The last option would allow for a gradual transition and the

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implementation of a pilot program with time to adapt and address concerns as the program rolls out. Also, since it is believed that manual curbside collection will no longer be available to the City past the year 2029, this option delays the transition to automated collection as long as possible while still allowing for an orderly transition.

City staff presented this information of the new contracts to the [City's Solid Waste Advisory Committee \(SWAC\) on March 21, 2023](#). SWAC will be meeting again on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at Council Chambers to provide their own recommendation on the City's new solid waste contracts and will allow opportunity for public comment. City Council will have a public hearing and action on April 10, 2023. If approved, the contracts would go into effect for July 1, 2024.

Public feedback is welcome by contacting your City Councilor or sending an email to Concord General Services at generalservices@concordnh.gov.

More information and an updated document of Solid Waste FAQs is available at www.concordnh.gov/solidwaste.

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Concord General Services is the public works department for the City of Concord, New Hampshire that delivers services to enhance the quality of life of the community. Services include street maintenance, solid waste management, water and sewer utilities, drinking water and wastewater treatment, public property maintenance, City fleet and equipment services, and management of the Douglas N. Everett Arena. For more information, please visit www.concordnh.gov/generalservices.